

REMARKS

In response to the Office Action dated November 6, 2006, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration based on the above claim amendment and the following remarks. Applicant respectfully submits that the claims as presented are in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested in view of the following remarks. Prior to entry of this response, Claims 7-10, 15-16, and 37 were pending in the application, of which Claims 7 and 15 are independent. In the Office Action dated November 6, 2006, Claims 7-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Claims 7, 9, and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), and Claim 8 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 15-16 and 37 were allowed. Following this response, Claims 15-16 and 37-54 remain in this application, with Claims 7-10 being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer and Claims 38-54 being added by this Amendment. Applicants hereby address the Examiner's rejections in turn.

I. Allowance of Claims

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner pass Claims 15-16 and 37 to issue.

II. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

In the Office Action dated November 6, 2006, the Examiner rejected Claims 7-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which the Applicants regard as their

invention. Claims 7-10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer rendering this rejection moot.

III. Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected Claims 7, 9, and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and Claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Claims 7-10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer rendering these rejections moot.

IV. New Claims

Claims 38-54 have been added to more distinctly define and to round out the protection for the invention to which Applicants are entitled. Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable over the cited art and that they add no new matter.

V. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing remarks, Applicants respectfully request the reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims. The preceding arguments are based only on the arguments in the Office Action, and therefore do not address patentable aspects of the invention that were not addressed by the Examiner in the Office Action. The claims may include other elements that are not shown, taught, or suggested by the cited art. Accordingly, the preceding argument in favor of patentability is advanced without prejudice to other bases of patentability. Furthermore, the Office Action contains a number of statements

reflecting characterizations of the related art and the claims. Regardless of whether any such statement is identified herein, Applicants decline to automatically subscribe to any statement or characterization in the Office Action.

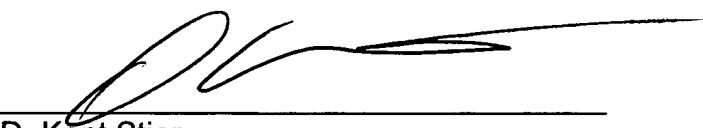
Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our deposit account 13-2725.

Respectfully submitted,
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